

there is an old saying that says,
"if one gets lost, he should look to the sky
and search for the tequila bird,
for if he is seen, then one is not lost,
but rather, he is home."

3/6/77: THE "AFRICAN QUEEN" REVISITED

a favorite fantasy is me and whoever
i happen to be in love with at the moment
stuck in the everglades of an african swamp.
our small boat, the "african queen," is tangled
in the reeds and just won't budge.
finally, i strip down to the waist and jump
overboard into the 4 ft. deep water. she stays on
board, as i pull the boat through the reeds
with a rope, and she directs me, pointing
out the way.

when i climb on board for a much-needed rest,
we find that leeches have attached themselves
to my bare back, and she quickly rubs salt
on the bloodsuckers, and she gives me medicine
to soothe the rope burns on my hands.
she is also crying, because she knows the
only reason i endure is for her.
after i have rested, i kiss her, and she holds me,
letting me know that she will love me
always. then i jump back to the
awaiting leeches, the dark water.

but what do you expect from someone who
(when he was 5 yrs. old), was seated
on the couch by his mother and told by her
that there was no santa claus
and that daddy was broke
and not to expect much for xmas.
i've been pretending ever since.

1/7/77: FOR THE FATHER OF MY FATHERS

when you see the gods
coming up the steps of the temple
to be received by you,
do not be foolish.
look not at their shiny, metal armor,
the four-legged creatures that they seem

to be part of,
nor marvel at their white skins
and flourishing beards.
do not look down at their feet in respect,
but gaze long and hard into their eyes,
and you will know the truth.
and when you sense the desperate greed and lust
within the very fibre of their souls,
kill them.

their blood will be red,
just like yours.
and your children will whisper your name
in awe,
with respect for years
to come.

-- RVargas

Long Beach CA

VOWELS

-- after Rimbaud

A, the bile of morning, the coats of Hessians
dead at Trenton. E, the tomcat balanced
on the oak limb outside my window, right
front paw up, unable to put it down and catch
the robin singing a lightweight song.
I, the bear I ate my lunch by in Alaska,
neither of us knowing it until his nap was done.
Fear froze me, mild annoyance like an old lady
nothing to hide anyway surprised in her bath
made him paw the air a bit, as though he held
soap and sponge in hand. U, the label
on Bluebird Records, "Shake It Up and Go,"
1940's, my song ever since. O, the bloody
hole, the end of everything, to which we are sucked.
whirling, gasping, our words at last revealed as useless.

STATE MEET

Mashona Marsh's black
Legs scissored over
The last hurdle and through
The tape. "19.4 seconds,
A new state record,"
And, "Why don't you tell me